







# CONTENTS

Editorial	3
Problems Encountered on Returning Students' Day	4
Open Letter to the ESRB	5
Open Letter to the Hampshire Community	6
On the Politics of our Daily Lives	7
Defining Moments as a Future Hampshire Student (pt 1)	8
Humanitarian Wal-Mart of Doom	9
What Drives Me to Get Ironic	12
Convocation	16
This is Hampbot	16
Who Goes To Hampshire?	17
The Keebler Empire	18
Poetry Corner	19
Auntie Marj's Home-Cooked Advice	21
My Summer Vacation	23

## omen

Volume 25, issue 1

September 16, 2005

### layout & editing

Anne Craig	Do you really mean it?
Ellen Dulaney	I'm not an invalid!
Vikki Finnan	Lots of things happen.
Jacob Lefton	Because he's certainly a liar.
Stephen Morton	I have handed in my affidavits.
Abby Ohlheiser	Stands above the high seat.
Sam Ross	There's no sitting to-day.
Shalin Scupham	Worker.
Courtney Sirwatka	Chocolate vanishes on the spot.

Front Cover by:  
Shalin Scupham  
Back Cover by:  
Andrew Flanagan

THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIRU:

Views in the Omen (5)  
Do not necessarily (7)  
Reflect the staff's views (5)



## to submit

Submissions are due Saturdays before 5 p.m. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, and typed hard copies will also be accepted, reluctantly. Label your disks well and they will get back to you. Get your stuff to Abby Ohlheiser, Merrill C312, x4482. You may also use e-mail. Send e-mail submissions to [awo03@hampshire.edu](mailto:awo03@hampshire.edu)

And be sure to read our policy box at the bottom of the next page before submitting.

Visit the Omen's spankin' new website! [omen.hampshire.edu](http://omen.hampshire.edu)

You don't really have to care about that right now; it's underwater.

Jacob Lefton, on New Orleans.

## "OH THE TREE WAS HAPPY, OH THE TREE WAS GLAD."

Editorial

**H**ello everybody,  
I have decided to announce that I have crossed over the threshold from "slightly skeptical OMEN editor" to "bitter older student extraordinaire". But enough about me, let's talk about a tree. I like trees, especially the one I can't visit anymore. That's right, the Hampshire Tree. Apparently the farmer who owns an unknown portion of the Hampshire Woods and the field beyond the woods, where the Tree is situated, has decided that enough is enough after a massive bonfire during orientation weekend left his property a mess. He billed the school \$2000 for cleanup, and will put up signs designating the point beyond which a Hampshire student will be reported to the Amherst police if he or she is caught trespassing.

I'm supposed to blame the first years, right? Ok. Holy crap! What the hell did you kids do out in that field to push the poor, nice farmer over the edge? I really can't believe it. I'm glad I got my woods walking in this summer while working on campus. From now until who knows when, the property surrounding Hampshire College -- property which was once open to our use -- is hostile to our presence.

It would be very convenient if I could blame the first years and spit out some broad generalizations about their behavior this week (they're too loud, I hate bongos, and I'd much rather fall asleep without the serenade of a circle of said percussion instruments, they're young, there are a lot of them, and I bet some of them drink too much), but the terrible truth is this: in all likelihood, the first year bonfire simply was the "point of no return" for the farmer, who has been picking up our broken bottles since before this incoming class was a twinkle in the admissions

office's eye, and probably before that.

Last spring, I walked to the edge of the woods and saw the farmer in his van picking up our broken glass. Somebody had pulled the backseat of a car into the woods along with some other furniture and left it at the edge. I saw him once more, a week later, picking up more glass. This time, he talked to me, asked me if I was one of the students who left broken beer bottles on the ground. I told him, truthfully that I had never been to a party in the woods. I got the impression that he thought I was bullshitting him. "Well," he said, "tell your friends not to do it anymore." He was very polite and pleasant considering he was currently picking up a mess that, for all he knew, I may have left.

I should have offered to help him clean up the mess, but at the time I thought it would be an admission of guilt, even though I had done nothing wrong. That justification for going my own way was a lapse in logic on my part. I regret not helping him, because I don't think the man has been getting the respect he deserves for being so generous to Hampshire over the years from *anyone*. I learned that the land surrounding Hampshire was private but open for our use from my orientation leader, and I told that to the orientation group I led in F04. That's not enough. It should have been announced at the beginning of orientation, because respecting that man's property while we used it was one of the simplest things we could have done as a "Hampshire Community", whatever that is supposed to mean at the moment, to create some sort of positive connection to the outside world. If we can't keep our neighbors happy, how are all the Hampshire idealists running about supposed to think they can make the world a better place?

## policy

The *Omen* is Hampshire's longest-running bi-weekly publication, established by Stephanie Cole in December of 1992. In the past, submissions have included students' perspectives on the campus, administration, news, movie reviews, commentary, short fiction, satire, first born, artwork, comics, and the occasional embarrassing self-promotion. Everything the *Omen* receives, provided it is sent from a member of the Hampshire community, will be published unless it is deemed libelous or defamatory. Although we find such things amusing and entertaining for countless hours, it is just not an option in this forum. Libel will be considered clearly false or unsupportable writing that maliciously damages a person's reputation.

The *Omen* will not edit anything you write

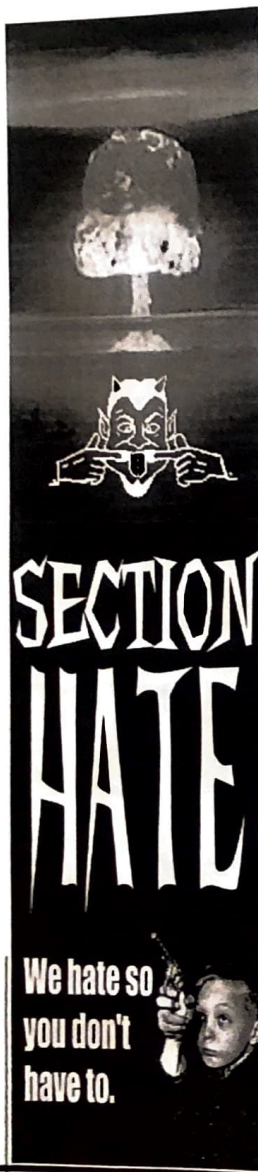
(except spelling and grammar). You must sign your real name (no anonymous submissions) and understand that you are responsible for what you say. Nonetheless, views in the *Omen* do not necessarily represent the views of anyone, anywhere, living or dead.

There is no *Omen* staff, save those positions of editor-in-chief and layout editor. To qualify for community service you must be a consistent contributor and help regularly with layout. Layout times (and such) will be discussed at our meetings. Meetings are held every Tuesday after release of an issue in the Bridge Cafe at 9PM. Everyone, everywhere, living or dead, should come.

The *Omen* loves you.







## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED ON RETURNING STUDENTS' DAY

**M**onday, September 5, 2005. Hello, my name is Elton and I update the Hampshire Daily Jolt. I am beginning my third year of study at Hampshire this semester. This is my first semester running the Jolt by myself. Last semester I worked with Lemmy Koopa, longtime Jolt "demigod", who has now graduated and is on to bigger and better things.

I just wanted to say a few things about my experiences as a student returning to campus today. This is not to place blame on anyone in particular, just to state that there were some problems.

I got up about 4:30 this morning in order to catch a 7:10 flight out of Little Rock, then had to dash through the airport in Atlanta to catch a flight to Hartford that was scheduled to leave about 10 minutes after I got off the plane. After spending some time waiting for the Valley Transporter to pick me up from the airport, I had to wait even longer on the shuttle, as Hampshire was the last stop on our trip. I finally arrived on campus around 3:30-3:45 in the afternoon.

The first surprise I got was that storage was now closed, and I will have to wait until 9 tomorrow morning to get my stuff. In other words, all I have is what I brought on the plane. At least I have my computer.

Then, after starting to get hungry, I found that Saga was closed, and that the dinner that was being served in the RCC was now over. Perhaps I was at fault here, since my computer's clock (not yet having been

adjusted to the Eastern Time Zone) led me to believe it was nearly 6 pm when I decided to get dinner, when it was actually almost 7. So, I had to eat out of the way-too-expensive vending machine in the Merrill basement with the tiny amount of change I had left.

Finally, I have some books I borrowed from the library that are due today. Unfortunately, every external door to the library appeared to have been locked around 7 pm when I checked.

So, I hope you all can understand when I say I felt a little unwelcome coming back to campus today. First-years are treated to an early move-in date and a campus focused on facilitating their arrival, not to mention all the special orientation programs. Of course, I understand the need to put these things on for our new guests. However, why is it that returning students are given practically nothing but their keys back? We're not advised on how, when, and where we should arrive in order to make our return run smoothly.

My point is that returning students are expected to arrive on a particular date, not a day before, but when we conform to this requirement, our transition is not made any easier than if we had arrived on a deserted campus.

Well, what do I expect? I know it's not my place to demand more from the already busy staff, especially when I probably arrived a little too late. But when am I supposed to arrive? What can I expect when I get there? How am I supposed to get my

by: Elton Joe

## OPEN LETTER TO THE ESRB

**D**ear Entertainment Software Ratings Board,

Thank you very much for recently upgrading the rating of your game Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas to Adults Only. However, please consider increasing the rating so that no one can play the game. Here's my reasoning.

Grand Theft Auto used to be a family game for me and the rest of my family. Several days a week, we would get together for the prime purpose of theft and mutilation and breakage of

laws. We'd sit there and laugh as Grandma would beat her first cop to death or cheered when we discovered that junior had a passion for killing prostitutes with his car of Jesus justice. It was great for stress relief too. Often, after a day when the wife wouldn't stop nagging, I'd just see her face on every pedestrian I viciously ripped into and I'd feel much better afterward.

But when I heard about this "Hot Coffee" modification that unlocked a mini-game of unlimited debauchery and perversion

I was completely disgusted. It's entirely inappropriate that any game would advertise the disgusting act of sex as a fun game. Just from seeing pictures of the modification on the internet, I was tempted to just take my wife in my arms and have my way with her. I think junior must've seen the pictures too, because I caught him jumping open-mouthed fully clothed on some girl and asking her where her control stick was so he could "keep in rhythm". You can bet

continued on page 8

## Elton Joe's letter to Hampshire (Continued from previous page)

stuff? What am I supposed to eat? When is the campus actually going to be operational?

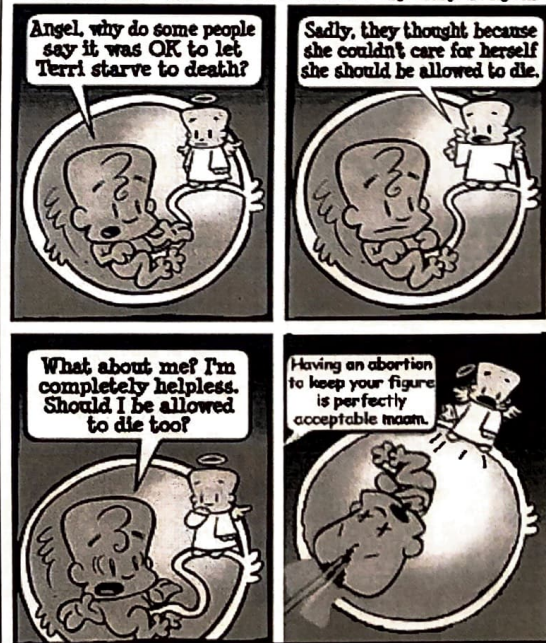
All I expect is a little hospitality on the day of our return.

On the subject of welcomes, I would like to formally welcome all new and returning students to the Jolt. This is an unofficial online community that has been serving Hampshire for the past several years. Any time you need to post an announcement or event, sell some stuff, find important information, discuss pertinent issues, or just waste time, we'll be open right when you need us. Please feel free to contact me about anything you need. A link to the contact form will always be available at the bottom of the front page.

I hope to be able to better serve you in the upcoming year.



## Umbert the Unborn by Gary Cangelmi



submitted by: Michael Petersen



# SECTION SPEAK

News, Commentary,  
Announcements,  
Propaganda,  
Editorials.

## THIS ISSUE'S THEME: OPEN LETTERS TO HAMPSHIRE!

**D**ear Hampshire Community.

First of all, welcome (back) to Hampshire! Everyone is excited for his or her new classes, new room, new dorm or mod, new friends and new stories to tell. That's what coming back to school is all about. However, it seems we've gotten off to a rocky start, and, like everybody else, I have a small something to say about it. For people who don't know me well, I rarely feel compelled to "say something" to or about the Hampshire community, so please read.

For whatever reason, this year's community has decided to change its "community norms," as we so lovingly call them here. Somehow things like fire alarm "pulls," "borrowing" personal bikes, and other such disrespects to our peers have become acceptable to some people. Well, the simple response to that is: "They're not." Remember, everyone on Hampshire campus should be allowed certain rights, like the right to sleep through the night, or to not have to handle bike theft, or things as simple as not stepping in gum on the way to class.

On privileges: We, as a community, are given certain privileges that we probably don't deserve and often don't appreciate. Privileges like Breakfast With the President, or fresh farm produce in our salad bar, or being able to publish nearly anything in the Omen. One such privilege was our permission to walk onto private property with our friends to drink, relax, dance, or even get

naked. Now, to preface this, I'd like to mention that I have never been to the Hampshire tree. I may never go. But to think that in our community there are people who find it acceptable to abuse someone else's property and the earth disheartens me. This is not the kind of community we want to be. Though we are still children, are we not past the stage of getting our privileges taken away when we're bad? We know better than to disrespect our neighbors in such a heinous fashion.

There have been a lot of words flying around about whose fault these things are, who are the perpetrators, where are they and how we can make them pay. Some people have decided to blame the incoming class, while defensive first years turn right around and say "It couldn't have been us, we don't know anything about the school!" Well, I say this, not about first years versus returning students, but about Hampshire students as a whole:

We are a community. The mistakes of our brothers and sisters are ours to correct. As community members, it is our responsibility to show our neighbors where the recycling receptacles for their beer bottles are, to make fire alarms unacceptable, to show how to respect us and to respect them in return. If you see a bottle on the ground, pick it up and recycle it. We are all in this together, and soon, maybe, nobody will step in anybody else's gum.

Love,  
Sarah Weiss

by Sarah Weiss

## ON THE POLITICS OF OUR DAILY LIVES

**L**et's assume for the purpose of this article that Hampshire College and its community are interested in social change, reconfiguring the present society to eliminate its undesirable attributes: war, poverty, environmental destruction, alienation, etc. Hampshire's classes, projects, and events critique today's institutions, and we generate ideas about how we could change our economic system, our country's foreign policy, our prisons, and our schools. I want this interest in change to transfer outside of these curricular endeavors into all aspects of our lives: our activities on a Friday night, what music we listen to, what slang we use with our friends, and other matters of daily life.

Culture is not innocent or decorative; rather, it is a necessary and instrumental part of maintaining the current dynamics of domination and exploitation. The discrepancy in power and access to resources created by our economic system relies on an apologist culture that explains and justifies the present system. Theorist Antonio Gramsci addresses this in his concept of hegemony, the dominant class setting the cultural norms of a society.\* While those in power attempt to construct what appears as "common sense" or the "natural" way things are, individuals and groups can make counter-hegemonic efforts to destabilize and reconfigure cultural practices and customs. By changing the inertia of the way we speak, think about, and

live our lives, we can open up fissures creating earthquakes from which a new society is possible.

I propose that we begin to look at our lives, conversations, and school as texts. Three questions can be asked of each text: what ecological and economic resources does this use, does this support an already established producer or does this buoy up someone who lacks resources and advocates, and to

"Examining our choices about our consumption patterns, our extracurricular activities, our speech, and our intrapersonal relationships can lead us to make decisions that further change in our world. Instead of our lives being determined by the existing culture, we can be cultural inventors shifting the sand of the social landscape to create a society we want to live in."

what extent does this text create alternatives to what already exists. Examining our choices about our consumption patterns, our extracurricular activities, our speech, and our intrapersonal relationships can lead us to make decisions that further change in our world. Instead of our lives being determined by the existing culture, we can be cultural inventors shifting the sand of the social landscape to create a society we want to live in.

I anticipate the following

objection to what I am presenting: "I listen to Iron Maiden because I like it. I do not choose to like their records. I just do, and I am not going to be inauthentic to my music taste." To this viewpoint, I point out the presence of time and criteria. Certain time constraints surround every preference and pattern: there was a period when one did not listen to Iron Maiden and there will be a period in the future when their albums have been traded into the record store. At these specific points of choice making, one consults her/his set of criteria that concern priorities, values, assumptions, ideologies, and desires. These criteria are neither natural nor unwavering; we have the ability to analyse and change these constructions.

We are not pieces of seaweed merely drifting in a deterministic ocean of the existing society and our own patterns. I invite the students of this institution to not only consider themselves political activists but also cultural activists. So I say: Go starboard, not yet sense makers and let's make the sea as we sail through it!

\* See Gramsci, Antonio (1971), *Selections from the Prison Notebook*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare & Geoffrey Nowell Smith, Lawrence and Wishart, London

Olive McKeon is a student of the School for Designing a Society in Urbana, Illinois. She welcomes respondents, advocates, and disagree-ers to write to kom04@hampshire.edu.

by Olive McKeon





# DEFINING MOMENTS AS A FUTURE HAMPSHIRE STUDENT: PART ONE

I'm sure you have them. Those moments in your past which, in retrospect, set you up for being a student here at Hampshire. Those anecdotes you may or may not tell, but which are forever burned into your memory. These are mine.

My biggest memory of this sort happened in second grade. We had talked in class about various forms of discrimination and, to help us understand this concept, the teacher decided to try an experiment. One day we were going to come into class and for the first half of the day, up until lunch, the boys would be favored and the girls discriminated against. The girls would have to sit in the back of the classroom and would only be given a chance to answer a question if none of the boys knew the answer. After lunch and recess, the boys and girls would switch roles for the rest of the day, with the girls favored and the boys discriminated against.

Now I, in my seven-year old head knew that discrimination was a Bad Thing. It wasn't fair or nice. I therefore decided that I was going to resist all this. We, the class were all in our usual seats and the teacher told all the boys to move their desks to the front and the girls to the back.

I was in the second row and I stayed there and watched as my male classmates rushed in to get the far front spots. Their desks were jammed in one against the other. There was a sizable gap between the hindmost boys, of which I was one of at this point, and the frontmost girls. Class began. From time to time the teacher would ask us a question, getting all the answers from the front section. Kids from both groups raised their hands but the girls were ignored. I knew almost all the answers, but I would not raise my hand to answer. Eventually there was a question that none of the other boys knew.

"None of my smart guys know this one?" asked our teacher. It wasn't a very hard question. I remained with my hands down. "I guess I'll have to ask one of the girls then." One of them gave the answer that I knew.

As this went on I decided to increase my resistance. I began silently creeping my desk backwards towards the girls, a show of solidarity, even if I didn't know that word then. It seemed the right thing to do.

I went bit.

By bit.

By bit.

Eventually the teacher saw that I had moved farther back.

"Stephen, please rejoin us up front." I reluctantly did as I was asked and waited for a short while. And then, I began moving backwards again.

Bit.

By bit.

By bit.

Again, my teacher noticed when I was about halfway between the boys and the girls. "Stephen, rejoin us up front please." This time, I refused and held my ground. Again, the teacher asked me to move back up, and again I refused. This was incredibly hard for me to do; it went against a directive almost, as I learned that day, almost as strong as the one that was making me stand up for the girls. I began to cry.

My teacher took me out into the hall and we talked for a short while, with me crying through the entire conversation. The result was that she canceled the rest of the experiment. It wasn't long before lunch at this point, and we all moved our desks to their original configuration. Unfortunately, the net effect of my protests, aside from their lasting affect on my psyche, was to make the girls in my class unhappy with me: they didn't get their chance to be the favorites.



## OPEN LETTER #2

that was three days in the basement for exposing himself to such filth on the internet.

I was just horrified that they'd disturb such a wholesome family game with such an inappropriate thing such as sex. It's great that you changed this rating because it shows that our government

will not bend to the ideas of "creative freedoms" that my wife and I should make any effort to control our own children. As such, I'd like to suggest a complete and blanket ban on any game where you can even see a female character's ankles. In fact, if possible, please go back

in time and remove all women from video games, since they've been tempting our nation's young men for far too long. Once again, thank you very much for listening to me. I have to go buy some Harry Potter books to burn now.



# HUMANITARIAN WAL-MART OF DOOM

Friday evening NPR report I heard whilst delivering organic black kale, beets, and cucumbers to Triple Creek Ranch, just south of Darby, Montana:

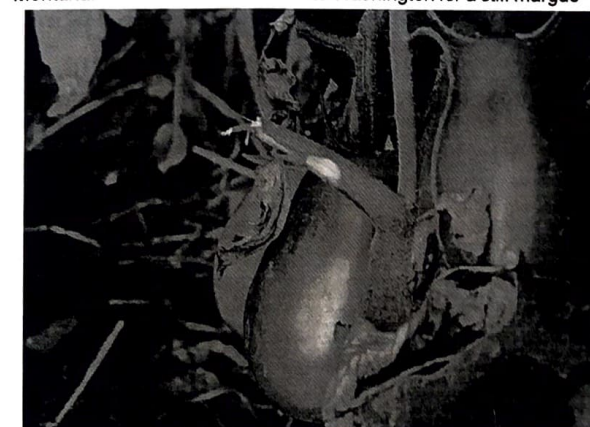
suggest listening yourself <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4839696>.

Meanwhile Michael Brown, the head of FEMA, is going back to Washington for a stiff margue-

By the time this lil' piece is published people will most like have been wondering why big bad Wally whooped Ws. relief efforts. If the 'buck' supposedly stops on his desk, as it did when Harry S. Truman's coined the phrase, then Bush and whom-ever influences so many of his decisions are to blame for the piss treatment of our fellow citizens in both long-term (dwindling social services) AND immediate (livelihoods suddenly BURIED UNDER TWO FUCKING STORIES OF WATER) scenarios. That's all the caps I'll use in this piece, promise. Anger in writing = less useful than contributing to relief funds or volunteering. In any event I've now semi-witnessed an evil corporation (boo) better equipped/organized (yay) to deal with certain areas of disaster response than my patriarch and his administrative kith. I would like to publicly thank Wal-Mart for providing basic necessities to my fellow human beings when much of their shit had just 'hit the fan'.

It appears Wal-Mart knew where trucks could get in, while FEMA didn't know people were starving in the New Orleans Super Dome. It appears Wal-Mart was supplying potable water and ice to keep foods from spoiling while Jesse Jackson was yelling outside a locked federal air force base to let in a large group of refugees he was leading (oh yea- Louisiana senator and California congresswoman orga-

(continued on next page)



The one in front is probably gender neutral.

Wal-Mart was there first, providing relief to several towns in the Mississippi Gulf area. I.E. two days after the hurricane hit they were sending metric tons of water and ice, and collaborating with local police departments to set up organized distribution sites. After 'Mart's initial emergency supplies began to run low-supplies their Emergency Relief wing (for real) had been storing in trailers up to three months in advance of hurricane season-they used their obscene logistic networks to fly/truck stuff in from Colorado, Canada, etc. (Note: this is what I'm recalling ~5 hours after I heard the report, and if you want the precise details I'd

rite, with politicians and media folks complaining about his lack of leadership and bungled disaster response. I smell something of a scapegoat (Michael Brown = college buddy of Bush's first FEMA chief, with questionable credentials ta boot) but discussing that facet would eventually require I diatribe re: the Bush Administration and the interesting budget games that left New Orleans *et al.* ripe for this very situation. Somewhat more to my point (methinks) is the current infrastructure of FEMA and federal response, especially with regards to communication and the mobilization of resources/aid.

By: Aaron Buchsbaum



nized those buses) Did I mention we have foreign aid offers sitting in foreign countries, because we have no national idea how to best use them? Well if I didn't then plenty of other smarter/more knowledgeable news sources have and feel free to arm yourself with dissent as you see fit. It's thoroughly exciting and makes me feel manly

Now a 1-2 question combo: Were the areas of Wal-Mart relief amongst those most f'd up by Katrina, and will their inevitable PR blitz be roughly equal to

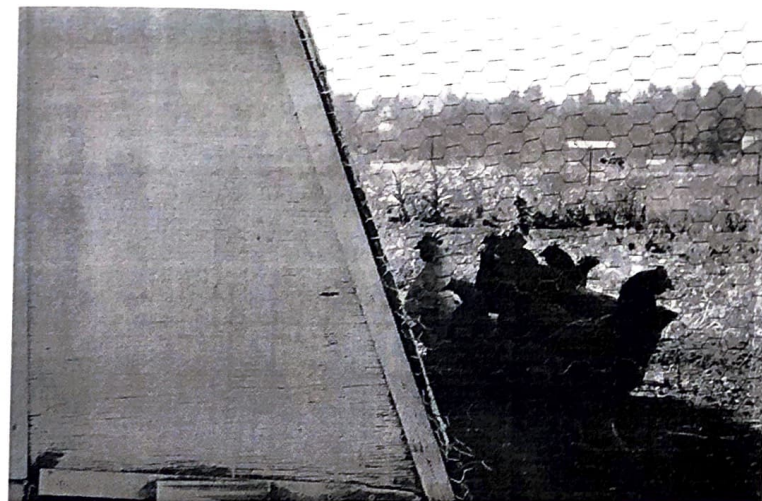


Now imagine them all over the ground e.g. clusterfuck!

said relief? 'Mart is cooking up videos for the public to improve its image and get good PR, and for who knows how long we'll be hearing that shite. I think humility is amongst the noblest ideals, and thus will be resenting the 'Mart for newish reasons if it's still touting Katrina relief a year from now. 'Mart will certainly lift some of the stains of horrible business policies, part (cough:: full ::cough) time crap wages, pushing local storefronts out of business, etc with this, however in the end it's still a sketchy busi-

ness and people who have hated the WM will continue to hate the WM. Acute hurricane response is likely incommensurate with prolonged & widespread disregard of humanitarian ethics (respect towards employees via living wages/benefits), still this sudden and seemingly bizarre humanitarian (truly) response is fantastic and should of course be coming from the government. You know, that big social net we pay taxes to.

Work with me a moment, and imagine Wal-Mart and the current federal administration are webs spun by two different (but possibly related) spiders. How do each of them look to you? In terms of size the WM I'm thinking is smaller, although the more I ponder this analogy I might convince myself otherwise. Certainly WM had no Supreme Court chief justice to nominate, or much Iraq politicking/warfare to conduct, or USDA diet recs to revamp. The WM does, however, share in control/coordination of a vast resource network, administration and governance of an international institution, a giant PR program. . . fill in more if you like. The similarities are out there I'm sure. The point of this comparison is partly to question whether speed of response to Katrina is a function of institutional size, or simply of preparation by the appropriate bodies of said institution. Was there advance stockpiling, by federal bodies, of emergency goods for hurricane season or what-have-you disaster? Did they exert control over local corporate bodies to assist? I'm afraid I don't have a clear picture of what all the administration has done; after brief (5 mins)



I killed and ate some of these with a knife in early August.

searching of govt sites (National Institute of Health, Department of Homeland Security) I found this <http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/katrina.htm>. It's a bullet list of things like 'xxx tons of water distributed, xxx number of Nat'l Guardspeople, xxx volunteers'. Looks like it changes every day.

The fact is this article (one you're reading) is equivalent to a half-formed thought, which maybe means I can't react quickly enough to Katrina either. But like Slick Willy Clinton has opined, we'll deal with the who/what/when/where/why (and sometimes how) of federal lack-of-response later and for now we should contribute to his (and George H's) charitable relief fund. Also I wanted to acknowledge the acute humanitarian response of a multinational warehouse corporation. The situation

sucks balls, is the death-child of poor policies and shitty social services, and I gave 75\$ to the relief effort.

Oh, and oddly the DOW went up over 200 point this week? What? Shouldn't insurance be hurtin'?

AsteriskAsteriskAsterisk

Hi ok, so my name is Aaron, I'm from NJ, I graduated last May (woot F'01?) and currently I'm working on an organic farm in Hamilton, Montana. I like especially playing in the tomato greenhouse, where I've been re-staking these 7' tall black plum plants that grew too large and fell/were blown over during a wind storm. It's basically a pygmy jungle and you have to untangle all the vines from ~4 different plants, clip them to a bamboo-ish stake, and finally prune all the diseased/hurtin leaves off. Takes a damn long time but in the end

they're friggin gorgeous. I've included a couple shots for y'all that may be of interest/amusement. Also the Bitterroot Valley in western Montana is gorgeous, although at the moment is filled with smoke from several large forest fire complexes to the east, southwest, and north. Most mornings you can smell it in the air, and across the street may appear hazy.

Finally, I encourage people to call the farmer who owns the field with the Hampshire Tree and apologize for being bottle-throwing nunces over the past xx years. Maybe he'll appreciate it. He used to drive around in a white van all over his field picking up our crud.

Ciao.





# WHAT DRIVES ME TO GET IRONIC: A REFLECTIVE PERSONAL ESSAY ABOUT INTERVENING POLITICALLY IN QUESTIONS OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND CAPITALISM

August 9, 2005

Irony<sup>1</sup> as a style of critique in the analysis of science, technology, and society goes right for the proverbial jugular of the knowledge system. It leaves nothing but a dead corpse after it is ripped out – but only if it can get close enough to swipe. Ironic critique unsparingly exposes all the contradictions it can see but not the contradictions of its own thought process, which it can't see. When it gets in close enough reach, however, irony finds that what it was attacking is just an articulation of scientific knowledge – not a clearly bounded or mortal organism. If the people who made or once believed these articulations ever become impaled by the ironic claw and accept irony as a way of thinking about knowledge, they become nihilistic. Irony offers no caveat about the good things going on within the object of critique – only biting dismissal of it. Irony is the kind of polemic that leaves the criticized person feeling estranged, those who listened feeling helpless, and the ironist feeling hopeless. One may try to win the war of argumentation through irony, but achieving success will likely result in a victory that is limited first by the few who listened and second by the fewer who were persuaded. Even in those few cases where it is achieved, the victory is a Pyrrhic one. The casualty of winning a battle by irony is not the ability to have knowledge, but the hope of transformatively reconstructing knowledge. Even if you can destroy the epistemological foundations upon which your opponent's views rest, irony gives your opponent nothing with which to replace her vanquished assumptions. Since irony cares only about the surface of ideas and not about how people come to have ideas about the world, the more likely response to irony is that your opponent remains unconvinced and uninterested, no matter how well you add in explanations of alternatives.

My point here is not to prove my particular analytical argument about science and society, but to explain the challenges I find in my efforts to do so. In much of my intellectual work, I strive to articulate a radical vision for science's re-integration with society. On the face of it, this idea may not sound so controversial. The contentiousness becomes more poignant by emphasizing the need to change the society that produces the science, and in so doing, the science itself. But taking on an object so big means almost certain failure: one can't

"practically" dismiss the whole world – not even with the strongest arguments – because the world can just keep on going. A "radical critique" needs to understand how its object functions according to a multiplicity of social logics simultaneously.

Indeed, a radical critique itself is shaped by a multiplicity of logics, which hopefully, are coherent. The two form two opposing multiplicities. In practical terms, however, each multiplicity is quite resistant to careful critique, because critical analysis usually requires focus on one issue at a time. However, one-at-a-time is not commensurate with the reality of logics occurring all-at-once. For instance, in certain domains, the integrated networks of science and technology (technoscience) already express certain distinct but mutually-reinforcing social logics: the rapacious logic of capitalism, which reduces people to consumers, producers, and other economic cogs in the machinery of society; the logic of reductionist knowledge, which confers the exclusive right to authoritatively represent nature to the scientific institutions that can create certain exceptional laboratory conditions; and more broadly, the logic of hierarchy, which forms social relationships of submission and violence. These logics expand through networks, embedded in familiar things and social positions that most people know (at least partly) through experience – industry, cars, patents, genetic engineering, and the engineers and technocrats who manage them.

While the manifestations of these logics are inescapable, a crucial part of what I consider leading an ethical life involves committing to resist and to strive to supplant the logics (and their corollary institutions and social relationships) that produce these things as we currently know them. I encounter the power of these intermeshed articulations when I start arguing with a person about one point of these logics only to find that she calls upon another point, which on the surface, is unrelated to the first point. For example, I might say one thing, "You know, thinking about genes as information reinforces an elitist form of scientific knowledge. Such knowledge really needs to be made more democratic so that the many may participate in its creation and evaluation," only to find that my opponent holds a distinct idea that social hierarchy is a natural and immutable component of the world. What good is it to talk about "democratizing

knowledge," when your opponent has already proclaimed the triumph of hierarchy over a liberatory democracy? Not only is the whole "system" flawed, it is incredibly robust, largely due to its flexibility in re-combining and re-articulating an array of ideas that reflect people's background experience in and feeling of the world. The question for me has been how to carry on the struggle I see as so necessary in a world where these logics are so omnipresent and banal that to win war against them can seem impossible at best and self-defeating at worst.

When I first started thinking this way about the world, I thought that I was just being systematic in my critique, but now I wonder if I may have succumbed to the argumentation style of irony. As an adolescent radical, arguments with my parents – who, unlike most people in my life at that time, were regularly willing to listen to me – confirmed my self-certainty. Although they were not able to mentor me in honing my radical critique, they were the only ones who would consistently listen to me expound my early versions of it. In retrospect, the first indication that I was slipping into irony was that after engaging with me in political-argumentative conversations, my parents would feel hurt. As I talk with them today, I can discern two main reasons why. First, they found my sweeping condemnation of all things capitalist to be selfish and impractical. For a teenager, this translated into very practical issues: would I refuse the clothes they wanted to give me as gifts on grounds that they were made in sweatshops, would I make a special vegetarian dish just for myself on grounds that the meat on the table was raised unethically, and most importantly, would I procrastinate in getting a job to pay for things I needed on grounds that being a wage slave was an awful life to have. My abstract condemnation of capitalism manifested in concrete everyday behaviors, which to my parents, seemed childish and scary, because it meant that I would not be able to get along in life as a regular person. I think that I sought comfort beneath the shield of adolescence as a way of escaping the tension between my budding radicalism and a world hostile to such ideas. From the safety of this shield I found it easy to hurl the spears of ironic dismissal at whomever was in range – most prominently, my parents. The second reason that my parents felt hurt was that even as they showed me great patience, I was not listening to them. Indeed, I justified to myself my bad listening by my certainty that my critique clarified my parents' delusional acceptance of the terrible reality that they had been given. I think that, for me, the enabling factor in my justification was, in large part, my radical estrangement from their values and beliefs, which I articulated through irony.

I would say that the style of critique I used during this time was closely related with, but still distinct from my bad listening, to the extent that the two became inseparable, however, was due to the ironic character of my ideas. Thus, it was not just bad listening, but also irony that I think made my parents feel hurt when we talked politics. While seeking a systematic destruction of the epistemological foundations of what my parents had been accepting as true, I offered no alternative truth system that could be intelligibly incorporated in how they thought about the world. This destruction without a sufficiently compelling reconstruction struck them as depressing, but to their befuddlement, it did not do so for me. I think I was able to avoid depression, because I had already made sense to myself – if only intuitively – how I could live in tension between my denunciation of the basic institutions that structure so much of social life and my own experience of being in and imagining myself persisting in the world.

During my adolescent radicalism, while I felt that I could bracket out my ironic critique as separate from what I acknowledged as "occasional" bad listening, I think my parents thought my style of critique was an extension of my immaturity and poor listening skills. Although there is still a certain level of estrangement of thinking between my parents and I when we talk politics today, I think it has shifted from the more alienated estrangement of feelings to a more intimate estrangement of ideas. My father tells me that he just can't think according to my assumptions, but that he really respects my process of coming to my ideas. I too am now better at respecting how he came to hold his ideas and convictions through his experiences, and I am more willing to hear the practical constraints he points out in the utopian ideas that I articulate. As I look back, I am more willing to grant that there was an element of truth in what I understand to have been my parents' earlier assessment that my style of critique was connected to immaturity, but not without some serious qualification.

As I try to transcend my ironic tendencies, the one thing that I still think worthy of retaining from irony is the attention to the incompatibility and irreconcilability of certain things like capitalism with other things like the demand for a democratic science that is newly embedded within a democratic society. Irony is not the best way to ground this understanding, because it cannot help transform that which it can understand. Nonetheless, irony can explain an important half of the story by warning against false hopes of reconciling values of freedom and justice with the market system and designating where some of the lines of conflict are already drawn. For example, the

By: Ben Grosscup



ruling classes will never give up their power and wealth without a fight. After all this reflection, I would not give up this aspect of irony, which my mother still criticizes. Throughout my youth and into my early adulthood she has felt herself to be enlightening me by entreating me to see the "other side" and to speak in "both and" statements rather than "either or" ones. Instead of seeing the world as full of necessarily irreconcilable oppositions, she wanted me to see the good side of "genetic engineering," "capitalism," the "USA," and a host of other things I railed against. But it made no sense to me: what's the use of seeing the good side of something so fundamentally flawed?! As I see it today, my parents' estrangement from having their basic political views challenged was in large part an unavoidable consequence of me doing the right thing – developing radical social critique about the taken-for-granted features of life. However, my failure to listen tended to diminish the progress in dialog that could have come from being largely on the right track. So many good opportunities for dialog have been squandered in ways just like this.

My early radicalism led me to criticize things in ways that I now see yielded no apparent solutions to many others. But there are no easy solutions to show when you defend the position – as I do – that the whole system of capitalism, the state, and hierarchy in general is corrupt – all the way up and all the way down. My work in science studies has led me to see irreconcilable problems where many others see progress.

Throughout much of contemporary culture, technoscience is an object of usually uncritical celebration. Reinforcing the idea that technology is value-neutral, we hear that the incubus for valuation of technology lies in the private domain – that place where rational consumers consider and act upon their priorities. If we accept this, every time a new gizmo comes onto the market, there is no basis on which to celebrate the progress of humanity in general; all that is left to celebrate is the private satisfaction that the few people who can afford it will have. We celebrate the new inventions of technoscience – iPods, cars, medicine, satellite TV – yet strangely we celebrate these things within an aggregation of technological wonders that we rely on to make our everyday lives what they are. The celebration of technoscience is so raucous that it drowns out even the feeblest side comments that "technology can be used for the wrong purposes" – a notion that implies that the issue in technology is merely a matter of use not a socially-pervasive logic that is responsible for first bringing the technology into being. That we can speak of "technological progress in general"

rather than an array of objects we use to mediate our relationship with the natural and the social world indicates a valuation of an abstraction rather than the concrete methods, tools, and knowledges that people use for specific purposes. We can say that this technological progress deserves credit for producing useful innovations in society, or we can say that it is thoroughly corrupt, but neither really gets at what is important. Taking the second way is the ironic move, and although it is problematic, I want to acknowledge its limited place.

I tend to get ironic in my criticism, because I want to call attention to the deeply-rooted problem that technology does not have a place in society as an expression of socio-ethical deliberation. Acknowledging the usefulness of new inventions and new science is titillating and in many cases, even proper to do, but its social meaning is degraded by the fact that in a market, its use value is entirely incidental to its exchange value. That many people get cured by new medicines is not a problem for the capitalist, but it is subordinate to and quite easily alienable from the central goal of profit-making. This is not to explain the individual psychology or intentionality of all the actors involved, but merely to explain how they must act if they are to comply with the market logic that so strongly organizes their lives.

Not only in the use of technology, but even in the development of a new technology, the antagonistic relationship between buyer (of information, labor, land, materials, products, etc.) and seller, which is essential in the logic of the market, leaves no room to meaningfully share the process with others. Although the process can be attenuated by other relations that overlap with market relationships – friendship, kinship, even responsibility to "publicly" funded research institutions – they do not necessarily challenge the market's anti-social logic beyond the very limited scope of these auxiliary relations. The inventor can be sure that if her idea is divulged too widely – by either generosity or accident – someone else who stands to profit from it will seize the idea and patent it for himself. Perhaps the more likely situation is that the rival would be no one individual, but an aggregate of individuals under the structure of a privatized corporation. All the people in this space can be mobilized efficiently, and the product of their creative powers can still be owned privately. These organizations – these "private tyrannies" – the inventor fears most. Ironically, the only way to fend them off is to become like them. If you succeed, you will be working for yourself, and others will be working for you. If you fail, you will have to eventually work for one of the few who has succeeded. The ironic thing to say is to point out that no one who has an

innovative idea can share it with the world without succumbing to the logic of the market. While I find great truth in this statement, irony is not where I want to be, so I have looked elsewhere.

Through my studies, I became interested in the work of envisioning a better society. I thought that those who dislike the way things are surely must be able to offer an alternative. So I started reading about direct democracy, ecological building and agriculture, and egalitarian economic ideas. I wrote articles to movement comrades arguing that it was the realization of these ideas that we ought to be fighting for, not just for the cessation of pollution and exploitation. However, as I have tried to think through and articulate the contours of a better world, I have found that not only is it not enough to have a critique of the world, it is also not enough to have an alternative. When articulating a radical critique, the reaction of those willing to listen is often rejection – not necessarily just because of the all-too-common problem that the dejected radical relates back to them with social ineptitude – but more importantly, because without some tension between one's experience of the world and a desire for a new world, people will not experience any opening in their consciousness for a new knowledge system to replace the old. Indeed, if it appears that in any place a new knowledge system is gaining ground, one may feel quite terrified. The problem is not simply giving the uninterested an alternative, but figuring out how it is that people become capable of conceiving alternatives.

The best approach that I feel capable of imagining is one that combines a critical awareness of the conditions of life in this world with the insight that without new revolutionary events, the "solutions" to the problems are not readily realizable. This alternative to ironic criticism requires the individual to maintain and strengthen the tension within herself. Anyone who believes that the way the market pits us against each other is wrong must remain in conflict with the social relations that the market produces, even when going along with market logic is the only practical choice available. This leaves a person with the irreconcilable contradiction between wanting success in a harsh and competitive society and wanting solidarity with all its people. Within the individual there is no way to resolve this contradiction without simply snapping like an overly taught cable. This is the worst possibility, because snapping sends you flying either to misanthropically seek withdrawal from society (an illusion or an impossibility) or to become one of its ardent defenders (a path that so many good people unfortunately take). If ever this contradiction between personal success and social solidarity could be resolved, and a person could rightly be

in harmony with society rather than in tension and conflict with it, resolution cannot be realized by "looking deep inside"; it can only occur outside of the individual – somewhere in that nebulous, yet concrete, domain called, "society."

(1) In *The Invention of Modern Science*, Isabelle Stengers contrasts two ways of doing a philosophy and a sociology of science. She calls the first, "irony" and the second, "humor." In irony, the criticizer attacks the science without even being impressed by it. Stengers cautions against the nihilism of irony, and suggests that humor is the preferable approach, because it is a way that many people who are not trained as scientists can have the right to "laugh" at science without dismissing it with a sardonic smirk. Humor indicates that people are "interested" in the science, meaning that they have a connection to it: the science is part of their lives. Stengers points to the Salon era as a time when non-scientists could be impressed with science, but not passively, because they could still feel the right to criticize and laugh. In this paper, I'm trying to laugh – both at myself and at scientists – rather than be ironic.

(2) I would say that the early development of this tension was limited in the following two respects: the first moment contains nothing reconstructive at all, and the second moment is individualistically focused on myself, despite whatever ideological suspicion of "individualism" that I may have had. If this tension were represented as a bridge, the anchor on each side would be weak and the link between them would be under enormous strain. In other words, my nascent ability to resolve this tension was quite fragile. I've found that many people can live with the tension between a dismissive attitude toward the world and their experience of it, but this usually requires a firm sub-cultural milieu that can nourish people emotionally and give them a place to commiserate about their common antipathy to the prevailing power and values of the world. These subcultural settings in and of themselves are typically weak bases for long term commitment; as soon as the radical sub-culture falls apart or begins to seem wrong, the very powerful tension snaps, leaving people nowhere to go but back into the society they once rejected so vehemently.

(3) This particular theoretical abstraction afflicts both those who uncritically celebrate and unthinkingly deride the same thing: technological progress.





## Convocation or "Let me just cover myself by mentioning that I feel relatively bad about Hurricane Katrina"

Why do we love tragedy? Not that I don't or anything, not that it isn't awesome and strange and amazing...but why do so many people take advantage of it?

For instance, Convocation. Why did Michael Ford make the comment that it was a day of mixed emotions: happiness for the new school year and sadness over Katrina.

Are these two "emotions" really connected? Do we have to focus our new school president's inauguration celebration on Hurricane Katrina? I am by no means trying to underestimate

the importance of the Hurricane or the importance of our government's appalling lack of response, but I don't understand why that had to be connected to convocation.

I wouldn't have blamed Hexter for telling us about himself. I would have liked to hear about his plans, his visions, his...anything. It reminded me of Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> hysteria- though I hate to act as if it qualifies for its own name and date except for the day when our government let its people be attacked and then took advantage of them to send them to war and put money

in their own pockets, - when any such speech, ever, anywhere had to be connected to our nation's tragedy.

So, in conclusion, I wish that events and speeches and what-have-yous could be what they are and that people could resist the temptation to make themselves seem sympathetic and smart by talking about tragedies that have nothing to do with what they should be talking about. Katrina and Hampshire's welcoming ceremony have pretty much nothing to do with each other and that's fine, that's good, in fact, it's fantastic. Thank god.

by Annie Craig

## THIS IS HAMPBOT. WELCOME TO YOUR HAMPSHIRE(TM) SPONSORED EDUCATION. PLEASE INSERT QUARTER FOR CLASS CREDIT. MAXIMUM 30 MINUTES PARKING...

In years past, orientation has had group themes thought up by the leaders; in fact, this was one of the main attractions to being an orientation leader—the leader could introduce incoming students to their little corner of Hampshire culture, and incoming students had a chance to be involved in something that interested them, from arts to sports to defense against zombies. This year, incoming students were randomly assigned to orientation leaders who led essentially a packaged deal, not unlike many other liberal arts colleges. This was in effort to create a more even orientation experience, but it seems to have happened with the loss of a large amount of character.

Part of Hampshire's mission is, "through... testing and evaluating new ideas and new approaches to learning. Hampshire's actions serve as models for those of its students." Yet, when watching the school from a student's perspective it is hard to see how it can be a role model for new approaches to anything. The all but complete disappearance of independent study from Division I in an effort to retain students past their first year does not seem like the evaluation of a new approach to learning. In fact, it makes the first year at Hampshire closer to that of a normal liberal arts college than ever before.

Also, it seems that many other institutions have a senior thesis akin to the Division III, where the student chooses a project to do or topic to research and write about and then works on it for a semester or two. While Hampshire has more flexibility overall, if one knows how to play the game right at other schools, it is possible to have comparable choice. Plus, from a liberal arts point of view, many schools have stronger programs than Hampshire, based around core requirements of math, English, history, science, and language that are generally more basic than many Hampshire courses.

For better or for worse, Hampshire seems to be drifting toward the mainstream, but it is doing so in a way that seems incongruent with its stated goal of testing at new approaches to learning. If anything, Hampshire is quite lost. It is important for the school to choose a direction, alternative or liberal arts, and go that way. At the moment, trying to say both is too confusing, because liberal arts is the mainstream. The choice is an important one to make soon, because an institution that says one thing and does another will quickly lose credibility, and that is not something Hampshire can afford to do.

by Jacob Lefton



## WHO GOES TO HAMPSHIRE?

As our admissions literature will keep screaming at you, we're an eclectic bunch at this school, and intolerance of ANY weird lifestyle tends to get looked down on more than anything else. To generalize wildly, with overlarge strokes that are of course insufficient to describe any one person accurately or with anything approaching completeness, there are New York pseudo and real literati, Providence electroclash hardcore kids, former meth smoking punk rockers, militant vegans, serious organizers for democratic education programs, heavy drinkers, kids who will snort cocaine off your butt, genuinely nice people, bookworm playwrights who keep quoting Shakespeare, people who smoke pot five times a day, people who would rather not touch any substance, outdoors enthusiasts who built a rope course for fun in eleventh grade, seriously unstable individuals, straightedgers with tight pants, transnics, genderqueers, heterosexual white males from small towns in Montana, horseriding enthusiasts who are trying to get a novel published, dmt smokers, children of famous producers who own over 4,000 dvd's, good musicians, bad musicians, kids who have had spontaneous

religious experiences and don't want or need drugs, kids who took acid every three days in seventh grade, future librarians, wealthy and incredibly generous people with a lake house in Connecticut, latent schizophrenics, kids who understand multivariable calculus coming in but whose interests have bent more towards cognitive neuroscience, sluts, Borges scholars, virgins, nudists, people who have never seen a naked human being except themselves since they were very young, painters, book artists with this secret store of twenty hand-made artists books they haven't showed more than four or five people, noise artists, people who play four hours of video games a day, serious young people who work waitress jobs 20 hours a week and take like 24 credit hours, drug dealers who make less money per hour than they would at a legitimate job, incredibly excited people, incredibly generous kind hearts who truly love everybody, actors, successful 3-d animators with 50k/yr jobs right out of college, kids from like Baltimore who are like totally tripping on cough syrup from the bookstore and corner you on a misty evening and Tell You How It Really Is while you're having a cigarette

in the gazebo, etc. I guess the best advice I can give kids who are new to a college environment is to experiment and meet new people and smell what other people are smelling, but to know when to say that whatever is going on is just Not Your Cup Of Tea. Frankly, most problems here come about when student try and convince others of the Holy Righteous Truth of their issue of the moment, rather than simply living their life the way they want to

No matter what your idiosyncrasies, there are others like yourself tucked away in a corner of this place, and there can be something to learn from just about everybody here, there is nobody completely useless, at the very least they can serve as a bad example. And frankly, for the most part, people will be okay with you really being yourself. There's plenty to do here, and ultimately it's your own fault if you didn't get anything out of Hampshire; if you can keep your shit together (easier said than done, with or without drugs) and do a minimal amount of networking with your professors, you can learn an incredible amount about nearly anything through the five colleges.

by: Shalin Schubert



### Adobe Updater

The Adobe Updater must update itself before it can check for updates. Would you like to update the Adobe Updater now?

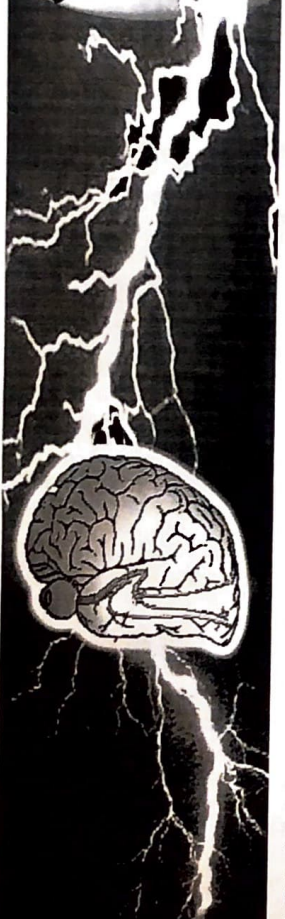
Quit

OK

submitted by: Abby Ohlheimer



# SECTION LIES



FICTION, POETRY,  
SATIRE, AND  
OTHER STUFF

## THE KEEBLER EMPIRE

As Keebler will admit, Keebler Elves are some of the most recognized characters in advertising. According to their website they're associated with "dedication, generosity and hard work and use wholesome ingredients and a bit of magic to bake their Uncommonly Good® products." But what people don't know is that the Keebler elves have a dark, dirty underside.

For many years the Keebler elves have been elitist, excluding black elves from their Keebler Hollow Tree in Bosky Dells. Out of the fourteen elves included on the Keebler website and on numerous commercials only one elf can be found. His occupation: "Foreman," which is obviously some tribute to George Foreman, whose grill allowed people to eat more cookies, because they felt they were balancing bags of cookies with the fat lost on the Foreman grill.

As if marginalizing blacks weren't enough, out of the previously mentioned fourteen elves only two are women. Mathematically speaking only 14% of the Hollow Tree population is female whereas approximately 50% of the total elf population is female. Something is horribly wrong here.

All this is the work of one man, actually elf, Ernest J. Keebler. Emie, as his disciples call him, is probably the most recognizable elf of the Hollow Tree. He is in every Keebler

commercial with his Christmas theme apparel of a red hat and green coat. That seems very ironic when one of his elves, Flow, said her best career move was, "Turning down a job at the north pole working for that sleigh driver, Santa." It appears that "Emie" has convinced the elves that Santa is evil, perhaps even a sleigh driver. When, all the while, the true evil is right in front of them, imbedded in their idol, "Emie."

On the Keebler website "Emie" stands above the other elves in far clearer animation than the other elves. Ernest J. Keebler is also the only elf powerful enough to have his own webpage which is titled, "Importance of Being Emie." In that webpage Ernest propagates his dictatorship by stating that, "A typical workday for us elves begins long before most others get up in the morning and lasts well into the night." This sounds like the exclamation of a sweatshop master. He seems proud of the misery and abuse he inflicts upon his followers.

The tyranny of Ernest J. Keebler is infecting the entire cookie world. Keebler cookies are everywhere: at the grocery store, gas station, television, and perhaps even your own home. The more Keebler spreads his beliefs, the more threatened the free world becomes.



by: Courtney L. Strawka

The  
omem  
Presents:



## POETRY CORNER

### FLAMENCO

notes are crooning for  
the strings reverberate  
underneath his fingers

strumming fast Ole Ole  
He does strum faster He Ole  
does strum  
faster

and the singer is crying out  
in a voice so  
thin and desperate

And of heartache. And  
of heartache  
And of heart  
ache.

you can see it by  
each finger that curls inward  
from an outstretched hand  
revealed in muted light

Without  
she appears at the edge of the room  
under heated blue lamps and darkness  
exposing the red of her dress  
He does strum faster

### A VAMPIRE'S ODE TO TEARS

It teases me  
This liquid  
Leaving salt stains  
On your cheek  
Runs as steady and warm  
As the flames beneath  
But  
Empty of red  
It is hope  
It is fear  
It is grief  
It is clear  
I am here  
White fingers upon  
Cheeks yet warm  
White lips upon a beating neck  
Until it beats no more  
And you are  
White as salt.

### FOUR HANDS AGAINST THE DOOR

She breathes painfully  
Into an empty stall  
Where I have hidden  
Here, long enough to hear her  
Sighs, and taps from nails  
Longing to rip through veins,  
Woven tighter than a corset.  
White against blue will disappear  
From the sky-mimicking pond  
And elder flowers above her,  
Fascinated by the cloud,  
Can not dive beneath her depths and  
Pull her out!  
We can only decorate her features,  
Only beautify her flaws ...  
But, could I, I would harmonize  
With the girl behind this empty stall.

poems on this page by: Rebecca Dolkart



## UNTITLED

'A journey of a thousand miles starts under one's feet.'  
Presently, it's all at the fingertips. Two clicks away, click-click.  
Knowledge is elastic. Nothing is liquid and nothing solid is out of reach.  
Everything is complicated so here's the material:  
An objective operating free of dense, colored money;  
An opportunity to oppose obstacles  
obstructing the optics of the off-set individual.  
Caution: the masses are awaking. Dry-land is inevitable.  
Greed feeds love, shove materials down the throat  
but materials are not edible.  
Intelligence is not measurable, attempts will fail  
(Broken rulers and shredded paper).  
Give bandages to the sky and apologies for the newspapers.  
The reason is the fault in which all the 'sons of liberty' dissolve.  
The daughters are appalled  
And sink their knees into the sunken liberties of all.  
It's a slippery walk in which everyone falls  
But also to the task of piecing together the drunken epiphanies of the  
dull.  
Indivisible: invisibly divided.  
Products in awe of the same progress but with a different read of the  
results  
(The difference needs to be resolved).  
Cause there's no star-gazers and fire-starters here,  
Only heart-breakers, desire-feeders clearing  
The way to splinter peace into the pulse.  
Intuitively know a dead forest when before one.  
This is the world spun from advertisements on eyelids.  
They're fancy and all,  
But the cold still stare at a sterile sun.  
No one will survive it.

BY JAMES S. BIRD

SECTION  
SWEET

## AUNTIE MARY'S HOME-COOKED ADVICE

After 4 years of broken  
hearts and failed relationships,  
when I may not mean that  
I would be an expert at how to  
make them work. Furthermore,  
some people might consider me  
a little bitter - my mother didn't  
let me date until I was 18.

However, it is much easier  
to look at everyone else and  
tell them what they need to be  
fixed, but when you're looking at  
a mirror, staring at your own  
reflection, it's a completely dif-  
ferent story. And for the record,  
I'm not out to hurt anyone. Just  
because my relationships all  
ended badly doesn't mean I'm  
going to give you bad advice  
- it just means that I am bad at  
taking my own advice.

The concern does started out  
as a fun hobby to keep myself  
occupied during the year I  
tried of more actually suggested  
it to me after I had been giving  
her advice all summer. So I fig-  
ured what the hell. She wouldn't  
have said anything if she didn't  
like what I was saying.

So if you want any of my  
advice you can send your e-mail to  
[mcglick@hampden.edu](mailto:mcglick@hampden.edu) or  
write a letter to "Auntie Cousin  
Advice" Box 627. Anything you  
send or will be strictly confiden-  
tial. I'll give you a fake name that  
best applies with your letter and  
I will respond to it as quickly as  
possible. And with any luck I  
will be in the next issue of the  
OMEN. If you don't like what I  
say, that's completely fine. I'm  
only here to help. And if I do  
well then I'm just happy to be of  
service. So here goes.

Dear Auntie Mary,

Just had sex for the first time  
with a wonderfully sweet guy. His  
used to be the guy I knew away from  
each other. Now he's in Indiana  
for a year and I have the only  
had about a week together. But  
I was amazing. He's sweet and  
respectful and calls often. Just  
nothing of us has long distance  
relationships. I'm worried that I'm  
only attached to him because he  
was the first partner with whom  
I had sex. Should I just give up on  
this wonderful chance with him  
to be with some guy who hasn't  
done? What should I do?

Continued

Dear Continued,

Many people don't know this  
or won't admit it to themselves,  
but the same the first time you  
have sex is a very important  
experience. It's natural for you to  
feel attached to the guy because  
you physically released (or think)  
him enough as a partner to let  
him pop your cherry. No one will  
ever take his place because you  
will never be a virgin again. But  
also considering the fact that you  
were only together a week, you  
might want to really think about it  
before you decide if you want to  
get into a relationship together.

Long distance relationships  
are hard. If you were closer to  
each other it might be a different  
story because visiting would be  
easier to do. And realizing that  
you're both college students,  
two monthly visits would be  
slightly out of the question  
because you can't exactly run  
your own and see him every



weekend.

When you make your decision, consider how much you really know him. Long distance relationships rely on trust and even though he might seem like an amazing guy, how much do you really know him? Do you know him enough to trust that he won't cheat on you? (If you in fact decide to remain monogamous.)

If it doesn't work out right now, you don't have to completely reject the idea of seeing him again. Sometimes right now just isn't the time to be with someone. So keep your options open and think about what you really want. Good luck!

-Auntie Marj

Dear Auntie Marj,  
My girlfriend of a year and a half has seemingly lost all interest in me. She recently picked up a new hobby, and it's taking up all of her time. The rare occasions, on which we see each other these days, it's like she's not even interested in seeing me; she just views it as an opportunity to read or study or do more concerning her new hobby. We haven't had any sort of sexual engagement in over three months—we've barely even kissed. Should I take this as a sign and just pull the plug, or should I stick with it because we've been together so long and just hope that it will all straighten out again?

-Lost Love

Dear Lost Love,  
The most important thing in a relationship besides trust is communication and honesty. And the way you speak it doesn't seem like you've talked to her about this yet.

If you are supporting her hobby than its possible she thinks its okay with you if she does it all the time. But if you think she doesn't seem have any time at all for you in her life anymore you need to talk to her about it. Because it is possible its just a misunderstanding.

If you don't know how to bring it up with her, try telling her you're happy that she's found something she loves, but you are in a relationship and you want to be able to spend quality time together without having her be occupied all the time.

Once she realizes this she might be more willing to be more intimate with you. Make sure you talk to her before making any rash decisions. It's entirely possible that she has no idea how you feel.

You have been together for over a year and anything that you have invested your time on deserves a fighting chance. Talk to her; make her understand how you feel. She might be very willing to make the change for you. And if she doesn't, you can always find someone else who will want to be with you.

-Auntie Marj

Dear Auntie Marj,  
Towards the end of last year I dated a boy but we decided to break up for the summer. We still talked occasionally over the phone during the summer and he came to visit me once. It was up in the air what our relationship was going to be when we got back to school, but I did assume that we would get back together. Now that we're back at school he basically ignores me. I still like him but am ok with just being friends. We have mutual friends so with him not

talking to me makes the situation awkward. I don't know what to do to get him to talk to me again. Please help me!

-Case of the Awkwards

Dear Awkward,

It's a tricky situation, and I've defiantly been in it before. Don't avoid him the way he's avoiding you. That's petty and you don't want to stoop to his level.

The best thing to do is give him his space, because that's obviously what he's (non-verbally) asking for. Then find a way to strategically bump into him. Like in the dining hall or at the mail room or something like that. You don't want it to look like you're hunting for him so some place communal. Then you can catch up and casually ask him what the deal is. It's unlikely with you're history that he'll just ignore you, but if he's still treating you like shit after that then he's not worth it.

It makes it more complicated when you have friends in common because chances rise that you'll run into him or his name will come up in conversation. But if they're good friends then they'll be loyal to you.

If you're having problems hanging out with your friends without him there then suggest doing things with them outside of the circle. Like going to a movie or hanging out somewhere. Hopefully they'll be cool about everything, and he'll feel more comfortable talking to you.

-Auntie Marj



# My Summer Vacation

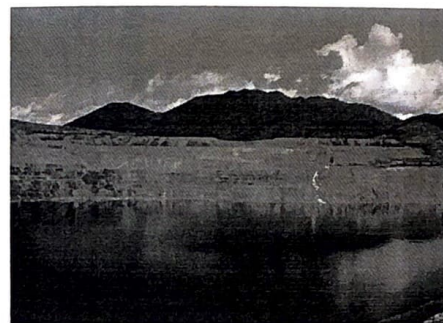


Attention all first-years: this cosy residence (above), inhabited by a recent Hampshire graduate, is the sort of luxury you too can look forward to after getting your degree!

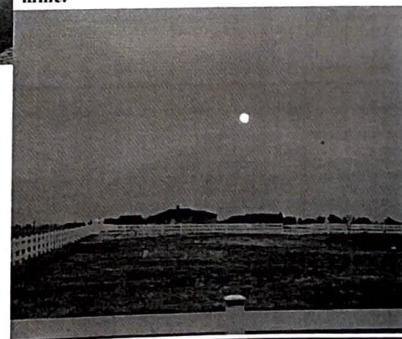
Aaron's not the only OMENite who can take pictures in Montana! Abby Ohlheiser also spent a week of her summer just outside of Missoula (birthplace of David Lynch), and pressed a button over and over on a funny looking box that produced undeniable proof of her journey!



Old mining equipment (above) and the Berkeley Pit in Butte, Montana. The Berkeley pit is an old open pit mine that hasn't been in use since the 80's. It has now filled with a toxic soup of water, minerals, and arsenic. University of Montana students recently discovered a form of algae that lives there. Mining has recommenced directly to the right of this view in a new open-pit mine.



Sunset in Hamilton, MT. The sun and mountains are obscured significantly by the smoke from nearby forest fires.

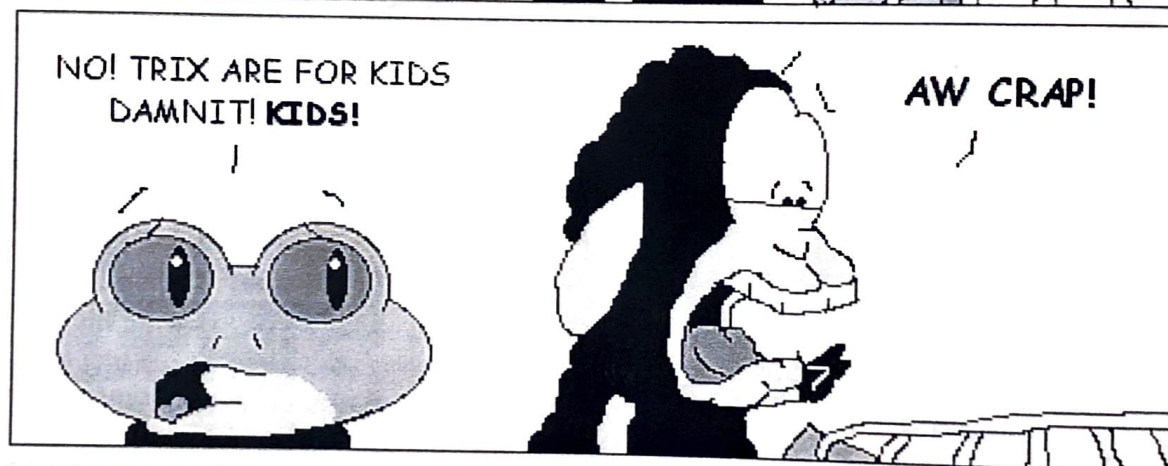
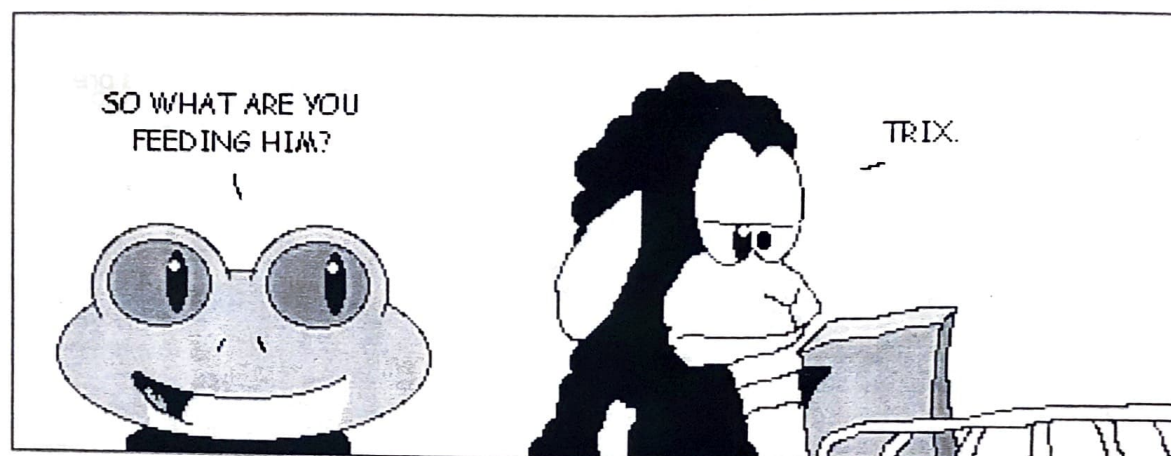




SPECIAL OMEN EDITION

# BLACK SHEEP & FROG

... Sneak a Rabbit Into Their Room.



BY ANDREW FLANAGAN